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FOR INL/LP MAYRA AHERN  
FOR WHA POSTS - PASS to NAOs and Merida Coordinators  
USAID for Donnie Harrington

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR KCRM KJUS EAID PREL HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAS: November 2009 INL Monthly Report

¶1. Summary. With the Ambassador's approval, Regional Corrections Advisor has resumed working-level contact with Honduran prisons officials and is advising the architect/project manager of the maximum security building project. Post followed up on the interim report of an at-risk youth program grant to a coalition of NGOs. Anti-Gang Project manager worked with DHS/ICE to carry out a pilot prisoner identification program. During the process of annual end use monitoring visits, Embassy personnel discovered border posts are half-staffed while personnel are reassigned to security details associated with anti-coup protests. End summary.

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Prison Reforms  
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¶2. Regional Corrections Advisor (RCA) has resumed working-level contact with Honduran National Police prisons Director Commissioner General Allan Najera, and individual prison wardens. RCA office has been set up at the national prisons directorate headquarters in Tamara allowing him daily contact with prison authorities, which will facilitate the implementation of the Honduras strategic plan more quickly once the project can be fully resumed. RCA has been working with the architect and engineering of the high security administrative segregation facility referred to as "La Maquila," reviewing the plans and making suggestions to modify some of the construction areas. The construction of this administrative segregation unit represents one of the most important security projects initiated under the administration of President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya. The construction began in March 2009 and was scheduled to be completed by November 2009 with an initial budget of USD 1,000,000. The completion of this project has been affected by several delays, which are related to bureaucratic procedures in the disbursement of funds, the acquisition of various construction materials and the Honduran political crisis. Despite all these challenges, the project is 82 percent completed, and in order to add modifications suggested by Don Stolworthy, INL Senior Corrections Advisor after his assessment visit conducted in January 2009, its budget was increased to USD 1.4 million. These modifications include the addition of a kitchen and infirmary areas. Responsibility for completion of this project will fall on the new Minister of Security, who will take office on January 27, 2010. RCA toured the Juticalpa and the Choluteca prisons to become familiar with these facilities in order to gain a better understanding regarding the needs of the country's prisons program.

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Police/Prosecutor Training  
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¶3. Post initiated the arrangements to train the DHS/ICE vetted unit at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynn, GA. The training is scheduled to be held January 26-February 12, 2010 and 14 Honduran law enforcement officers will attend. The course will cover a broad range of topics which include, but are not

limited to trafficking in persons, human smuggling, money laundering, asset forfeiture, warrant execution, defensive tactics, and surveillance and evidence processing techniques. The training will be provided using established ICE techniques but will incorporate the Honduran legal framework into the course curriculum.

The training will also include an in-depth practical exercise which will permit the students to utilize the skills and principles learned throughout the training.

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Gang Program  
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¶ 14. Regional Corrections Adviser and Gang Project Manager participated in the Regional Gang Program Working Group meeting in Belize City November 4-6.

¶ 15. INL has received the interim report on the Youth at Risk grant to 3 NGOs under the umbrella Federation of Honduran NGOs (FOPRIDEH). INL Gang Project Manager and INL Training Specialist carried out a field visit to monitor the work of the three NGOs in urban high-risk neighborhoods of the capital of Tegucigalpa. Work in tutoring and school reinforcement, alternative activities and sports, and leadership and non-violence training of 500 at-risk youth is proceeding well. Another positive result has been increased coordination and mutual training among the three NGOs, which is creating tangibly stronger interventions by each (Note: this capacity-building in coordination was one objective of the grant. End note).

¶ 16. Post is reviewing three NGO concept papers presented for new grants (FUNADEH - "Safer Community in Chamelecon" to support INL's Model Precinct project; Arrow Ministries - "Tracking Children Wards of the State" and GOAL - "Youth education and sports in La Moskitia").

¶ 17. Post and ICE National Gang Unit in Washington organized, and the ICE Vetted Unit Honduras executed, a successful mission to produce a new prototype of biographical software to eventually document all inmates in Honduran prisons. The new software includes photographs, biographies and fingerprints in electronic and hard-copies formats. A pilot collection of 69 prisoners' data was carried out November 9-13, including 10 gang members. Commissioner General Najera expressed his satisfaction with the product and wishes to use it to create the legally-mandated National Prisoner Registry. Currently, there is no computerized or even hard copy record of all prisoner records, and at least half of prisoners do not have useable fingerprints on file. Almost a quarter of the prisoners in this pilot had immigration hits in the United States, and some were found to have outstanding warrants for violent crime and murder.

¶ 18. The new Chief of the HNP Special Anti-Kidnapping Group, Sub-Commissioner Hector Francisco Garcia Godoy briefed Embassy personnel on the status of the work being carried out by his unit within the framework of the current no contact policy between the Embassy and GOH officials.

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Other Activities  
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¶ 19. In order to start the End Use Monitoring report, Embassy staff visited the Pavana checkpoint in the department of Choluteca. Located on the Panamerican Highway, Pavana is the most important police checkpoint in southern Honduras. Over 500 cars, buses and commercial trucks are inspected daily at this checkpoint. Training Specialist discovered that some of the equipment donated in 2008, including laptops, digital cameras and camcorders were not in place, and the police officer in charge did not know where the equipment was located. The post was staffed below normal levels because the de facto regime had reassigned half of the checkpoint staff to support security operations in Tegucigalpa. Post has inquired at the national director level regarding the current location of the equipment and will continue to investigate.

¶ 110. Embassy personnel attended the G16 International Donor Group's Security, Justice and Human Rights Working Group meeting, chaired by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The agenda included

updating the status of project portfolios, as well as the security and human rights situation in Honduras. According to UNDP, Honduras is on track to exceed a homicide rate of 60 per 100,000 population in CY2009, the highest in Latin America. Also, the group discussed a possible plan to support the governmental transition in the areas of security, justice and human rights.

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